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# THE UNDEFEATED





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# THE UNDEFEATED

AFTER MONTHS OF PLANNING, THE ALLIED ARMIES HAD BEEN LAUNCHED AT HITLER'S CAPTIVE EUROPE. SICILY WAS THEIR BEACHHEAD...



BUT THE NAZIS FOUGHT TOOTH AND NAIL TO HOLD BACK THE ALLIED ARMOUR THAT SPEARHEADED THE ONSLAUGHT.

## Chapter 1. *Silent Village*

THE COMMANDER OF ONE OF THE LEADING TANK SQUADRONS, MAJOR TRELAWNEY, STUDIED THE TERRAIN BEFORE HIM MINUTELY, THEN CALLED HIS SECOND-IN-COMMAND FORWARD.



FROM THE COVER OF AN OLD STONE WALL, THEY STUDIED THE VILLAGE OF AVERNO AGAIN.

BUT THIS IS FARMING COUNTRY ~ THERE *SHOULD* BE PEOPLE OUT IN THE FIELDS ! THERE OUGHT TO BE *SOME* MOVEMENT.

WITH YOUR PERMISSION, SIR, I'LL TAKE AN ARMOURD CAR DOWN THERE.

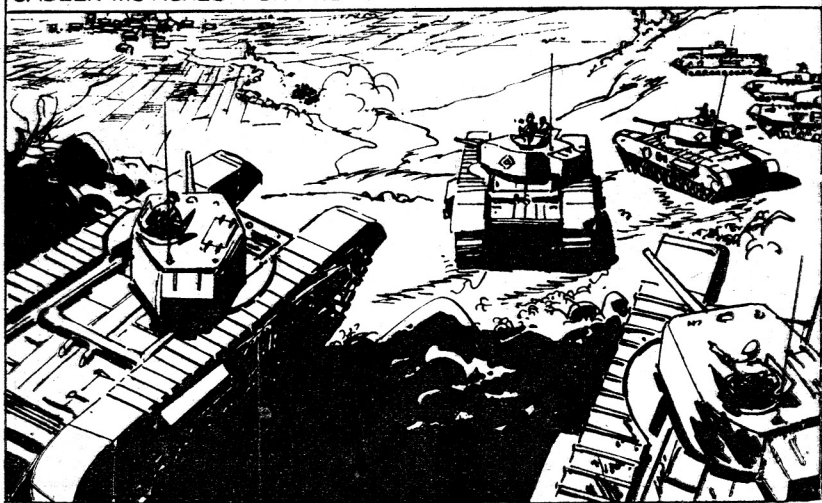




BUT MAJOR TRELAWNEY, LIKE THE MAN HE WAS, DECIDED TO MAKE THE RECONNAISSANCE HIMSELF, LEAVING SADLER WATCHING HIS PROGRESS TOWARDS THE VILLAGE ...



AS THE ARMoured CAR NEARED THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE, SADLER MOTIONED FOR THE TANKS TO COVER ITS PROGRESS ...



# The Undefeated

PEERING THROUGH THE OBSERVATION SLIT OF THE ARMoured CAR, TRELAWNEY COULD SEE THE STONE BUILDINGS AND THE NARROW COBBLED STREETS CLEARLY NOW. BUT STILL NOTHING MOVED ...



AFTER CIRCLING THE VILLAGE, TRELAWNEY ORDERED HIS DRIVER TO STEER STRAIGHT UP THE NARROW MAIN STREET. IF THERE WERE GERMANS IN AVERNO, THIS WAS THE TIME THEY WOULD SHOW THEMSELVES.





TRELAWNEY'S CAR REACHED THE MARKET PLACE WITHOUT INCIDENT. SATISFIED THE VILLAGE WAS DESERTED, HE CALLED THE REST OF THE COLUMN IN...



CAUTIOUSLY AT FIRST AND THEN MORE BOLDLY, THE TROOPS SEARCHED THE POOR DWELLINGS.



## The Undefeated

EVERYTHING THAT THE TROOPS SAW INDICATED THAT AVERNO HAD BEEN A NORMAL SICILIAN VILLAGE UNTIL A VERY SHORT TIME AGO -- AND NOW THERE WAS NO LIVING THING TO BE FOUND ...



SUDDENLY, THE BARK OF A RIFLE SHATTERED THE SILENCE AND SHOUTING COULD BE HEARD COMING FROM THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE.





THE HAPLESS SICILIAN PEASANT WAS SOON CAPTURED AND BROUGHT BEFORE TRELAWNEY WHO STARTED TO QUESTION HIM.



BUT THE FRIGHTENED SICILIAN STAYED MUTE--AND SUDDENLY CAPTAIN SADLER LOST HIS PATIENCE.



AT THIS SUDDEN OUTBURST, MAJOR TRELAWNEY LEAPT FORWARD AND GRABBED HIS SECOND-IN-COMMAND'S WRIST ...

WHAT THE DEVIL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, CAPTAIN?



SADLER'S RUTHLESS OUTLOOK HAD BROUGHT HIM INTO CONFLICT WITH TRELAWNEY BEFORE.

I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THAT THESE SICILIANS ARE OUR ENEMIES? THEY'VE BEEN FIGHTING US SINCE NINETEEN-FORTY!

I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN, SADLER~~ AND DON'T YOU FORGET THAT I AM IN COMMAND HERE, EITHER.



THE PRISONER WAS LED AWAY AND LOCKED UP FOR THE NIGHT, WHILE THE COLUMN FOUND BILLET'S FOR ITSELF IN THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

WE CAN TAKE THE SICILIAN WITH US~~PERHAPS HE'LL TELL US WHAT HAPPENED WHEN HE'S GOT OVER HIS FRIGHT.





BUT WHEN SADLER CHECKED WITH THE GUARD NEXT MORNING HE DISCOVERED THAT THE PRISONER HAD ESCAPED.

HE GOT AWAY WITHOUT THE GUARD HEARING HIM, SIR.

YOU'LL HEAR MORE OF THIS, SERGEANT. MAKE OUT A FULL REPORT. I'M GOING TO SEE MAJOR TRELAWNEY!

BENEATH SADLER'S ANGER LAY A SMUG SATISFACTION WHICH HE TOOK NO PAIN TO CONCEAL WHEN HE REPORTED TO TRELAWNEY.

I'M AFRAID YOUR PRECIOUS PRISONER HAS DONE A BUNK, SIR. I TOOK ONE OF THE RIFLES IN THE BARGAIN. I EXPECT HE'S TOLD JERRY EXACTLY WHERE WE ARE NOW!

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN. GET THE COLUMN READY. THE SOONER WE'RE ON THE MOVE THE BETTER.

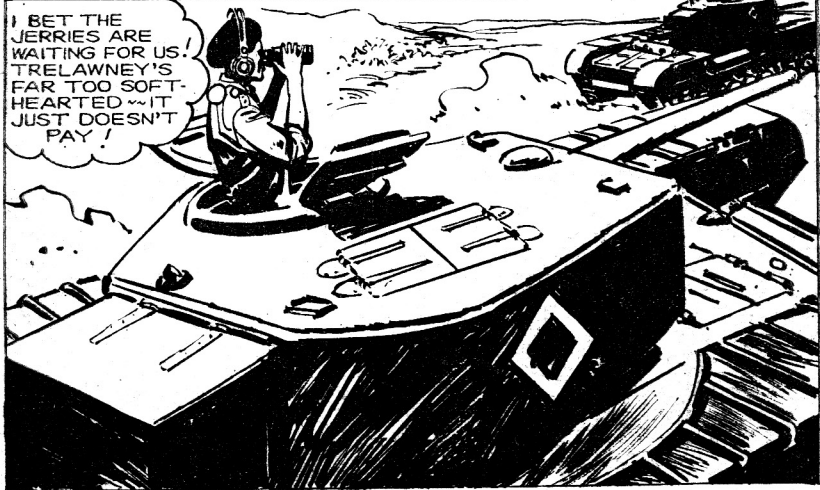
WITHIN HALF AN HOUR THE ARMoured COLUMN WAS LEAVING THE VILLAGE OF AVERNO DESERTED ONCE MORE.



## The Undefeated

THE CHURCHILLS ROLLED FORWARD ACROSS THE PLAIN OF CATANIA, THEIR COMMANDERS CONTINUALLY SEARCHING THE TERRAIN AHEAD, NONE MORE CLOSELY THAN CAPTAIN SADLER.

I BET THE JERRIES ARE WAITING FOR US. TRELAWNEY'S FAR TOO SOFT-HEARTED ~ IT JUST DOESN'T PAY!



THE ROAD WOUND UP INTO THE FOOTHILLS. IMMEDIATELY, TRELAWNEY CALLED THE REST OF THE COLUMN ON THE RADIO ...



ABLE LEADER TO ALL TANKS. STAND BY~~ THIS LOOKS LIKE AN IDEAL SPOT FOR AN AMBUSH!

HARDLY WERE THE WORDS OUT OF TRELAWNEY'S MOUTH WHEN A PIERCING SHRIEK RENT THE AIR AND HIGH-EXPLOSIVE SHELLS BURST AMONG THE COLUMN.

ABLE LEADER TO  
ALL TANKS -- BACK UP  
OUT OF RANGE!



THE LEADING VEHICLES SWUNG ROUND AND RACED FOR SAFETY FROM THE DEADLY MENACE OF THE HIGH-VELOCITY, ARMOUR-PIERCING SHELLS THAT WERE SURE TO FOLLOW THE RANGING SHOTS.

TRAVERSE LEFT,  
GUNNER -- SELF-  
PROPELLED GUN ON  
THE RIDGE. TWO  
ROUNDS H.E.

ON  
TARGET,  
SIR!



## The Undefeated

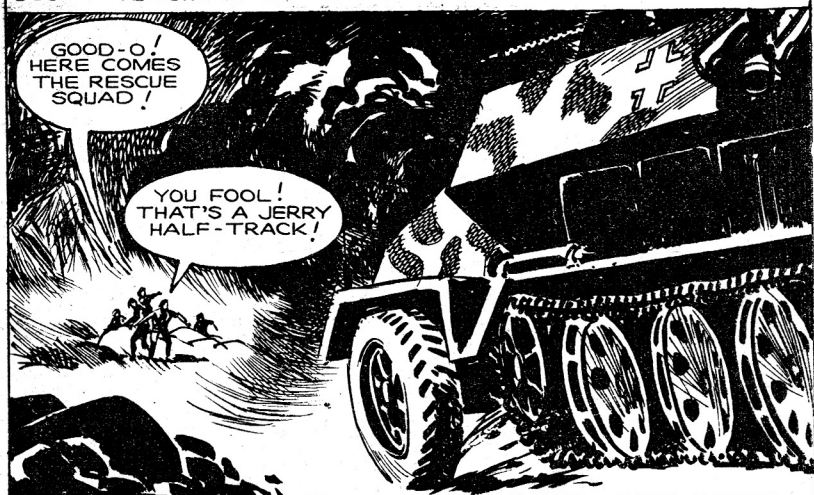
BUT AS TRELAWNEY GAVE THE ORDER TO FIRE AT THE ENEMY MOBILE GUN, A GIANT HAMMER-BLOW LIFTED THE TANK FEET INTO THE AIR ...



THE FIVE CREWMEN OF THE TANK SCRAMBLED OUT AND FLUNG THEMSELVES INTO COVER JUST AS THE 40-TON CHURCHILL EXPLODED ...



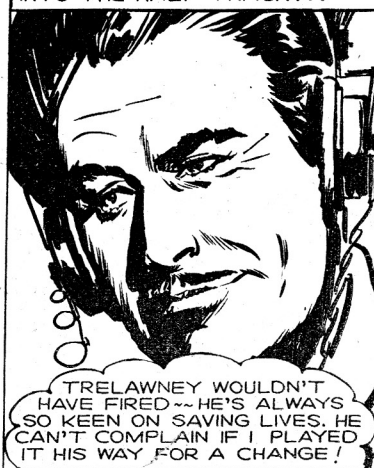
THE BATTLEFIELD WAS A SWIRL OF CONFUSION WITH THE STRANDED TANK CREW AT ITS CENTRE. THEN FROM OUT OF THE SMOKE AND DUST A VEHICLE RACED TOWARDS THEM...



SADLER'S TANK HAD HALTED OUT OF RANGE OF THE DISTANT ENEMY GUNS AND, PEERING THROUGH THE CHURCHILL'S PERISCOPE, HE WAS ABLE TO OBSERVE THE FATE OF HIS SUPERIOR OFFICER.



THE VITAL MOMENT PASSED AND TRELAWNEY AND HIS CREW WERE ROUGHLY BUNDLED INTO THE HALF-TRACK...

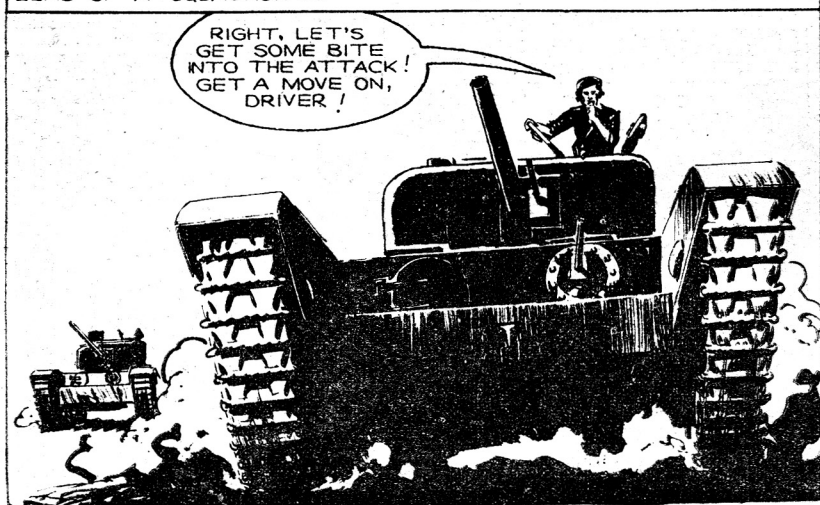




SOME OF THE BRITISH ARMOUR SWEEPED ROUND IN A FLANKING MOVE BUT BY THE TIME THEY REACHED THE ENEMY POSITIONS IT WAS TOO LATE. THE GERMANS, HAVING INFLICTED DAMAGE AT NO LOSS TO THEMSELVES, HAD WITHDRAWN...



AND SO, AS THE ADVANCE WENT ON, CAPTAIN SADLER TOOK THE LEAD OF "A" SQUADRON...



MEANWHILE, TRELAWNEY, SEGREGATED FROM HIS COMPANIONS, WAS BEING INTERROGATED IN THE BACK OF A GERMAN STAFF CAR...

YOU WERE IN CHARGE OF THE TANK SQUADRON, I PRESUME, HERR MAJOR -

YOU ARE ENTITLED TO KNOW MY NAME, RANK AND NUMBER, THAT IS ALL!



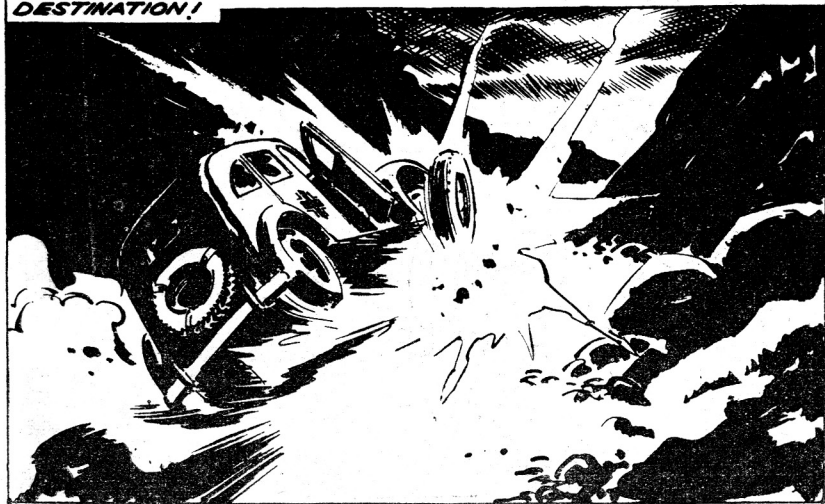
THE GERMANS, FORCED TO RETREAT ALL OVER THE ISLAND OF SICILY, BADLY NEEDED INFORMATION ABOUT THE ALLIED STRENGTH.

WE CANNOT GET ANYTHING OUT OF THE ENGLANDER OFFICER, HERR MAJOR.

WE HAVE NO TIME TO BE PLEASANT ABOUT THIS! TAKE HIM TO CATANIA. THE GESTAPO ARE THERE. THEY WILL DEAL WITH HIM!



AS DUSK FELL, THE STAFF CAR WAS SPEEDING THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS ON THE WAY TO THE COAST. **BUT IT NEVER REACHED ITS DESTINATION!**



# The Undeclared

TRELAWNEY RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS SLOWLY. AT FIRST HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHERE HE WAS. THEN, AS HIS SENSES CLEARED, HE REALISED THAT HE WAS STRAPPED TO THE BACK OF A DONKEY.



HIS CAPTORS STOPPED FOR THE NIGHT IN A MOUNTAIN CAVE ... TRELAWNEY WAS DUMPED UNCEREMONIOUSLY INTO A CORNER, FROM WHERE HE WAS ABLE TO PICK UP SCRAPS OF THE CONVERSATION ...



NEXT MORNING, THE LITTLE CAVALCADE MOVED ON, EVER HIGHER INTO THE MOUNTAINS UNTIL THEY EVENTUALLY ARRIVED AT A CLEARING...



THE SICILIAN'S EYES NARROWED AS HE TOOK THE PISTOL FROM THE HOLSTER AT HIS SIDE AND AIMED IT AT TRELAWNEY'S HEART...



## The Undefeated

TRELAWNEY, STUNNED BY THE TURN OF EVENTS, STOOD GAZING IN HORROR AT THE RUTHLESS SICILIAN...

BUT WHY?  
I HAVE DONE  
YOU NO HARM!

NO HARM? YOU  
AND THE GERMANS  
COME HERE~~YOU  
SHOOT OUR PEOPLE~~  
YOU KILL OUR  
ANIMALS~~YOU BOMB  
OUR CITIES! YOU  
CALL THIS NO  
HARM?

TRELAWNEY PROTESTED, BUT THE ONLY ANSWER WAS ABUSIVE. THEN HE PLAYED HIS LAST CARD WITH ALL THE CONFIDENCE HE COULD MUSTER...

YOU CALL YOURSELF  
A SOLDIER. AND YOU  
COME HERE ONLY TO  
KILL. NOW FEEL  
WHAT IT IS LIKE  
TO **BE** KILLED!

YES, I AM A SOLDIER.  
BUT I WOULDN'T BE SO  
COWARDLY AS TO SHOOT  
AN UNARMED MAN WITH  
HIS HANDS TIED BEHIND  
HIS BACK!

A FROWN FLICKERED ACROSS SALVATORE'S SWARTHY FACE, BUT IT WAS SOON REPLACED BY A CUNNING SMILE...

VERY WELL!  
UNTIE THIS  
SO BRAVE  
ENGLISHMAN!



A BANDIT SOON FREED TRELAWNEY AND THEN A KNIFE THUDDED INTO THE GROUND AT THE MAJOR'S FEET. IT WAS ALL TOO OBVIOUS THAT SALVATORE WAS AN EXPERT AND THIS WAS JUST GOING TO BE A SHORT REPRIEVE...

A KNIFE FIGHT!  
I MUST PLAY  
FOR TIME... GIVE  
MY HANDS A  
CHANCE TO  
COME TO LIFE  
AGAIN!



TRELAWNEY GRIPPED THE KNIFE AS BEST HE COULD, COPYING SALVATORE'S HOLD WITH THE CUTTING EDGE UPPERMOST. WARILY, THE TWO MEN CIRCLED EACH OTHER...

GUN OR KNIFE ~~ WHAT DOES IT  
MATTER, ENGLISHMAN? YOU  
ARE STILL GOING TO DIE!

HE'S PROBABLY  
RIGHT ~~ BUT AT  
LEAST I'LL GO  
DOWN FIGHTING!



THERE WAS A FLASH OF STEEL AS SALVATORE SPRANG FORWARD AND SWEEPED HIS BLADE UPWARDS IN A GLITTERING ARC ...



BUT WHEN SALVATORE REPEATED THE MANOEUVRE, TRELAWNEY WAS READY. HE SMACKED THE SICILIAN'S HAND ASIDE WITH HIS LEFT HAND AND, IN TURN, THRUST FORWARD WITH HIS KNIFE ...



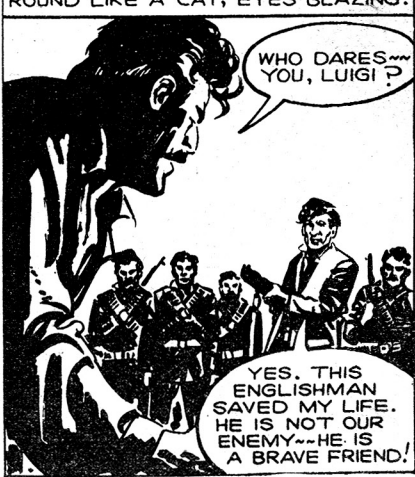
ENRAGED AND HURT, THE SICILIAN BROUGHT HIS KNEE UP INTO TRELAWNEY'S STOMACH. GASPING WITH PAIN, THE ENGLISHMAN DROPPED TO THE GROUND AND AS HE DID SO, A VICIOUS KICK SENT HIS KNIFE FLYING FROM HIM ...



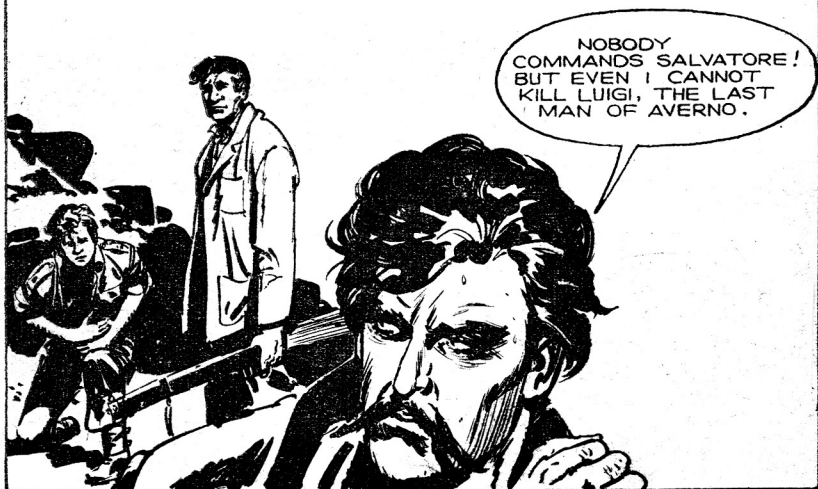
TRELAWNEY, GASPING WITH PAIN, LAY HELPLESS. SALVATORE TOWERED OVER HIM, KNIFE AT HIS THROAT. ...



A RIFLE BULLET WHISTLED ABOVE SALVATORE'S HEAD AND THE SWARTHY BANDIT LEADER LEAPT ROUND LIKE A CAT, EYES BLAZING.



IT WAS THE MAN THE TANK SQUADRON HAD CAPTURED IN THE VILLAGE. SALVATORE GLOWERED AT LUIGI FOR A MOMENT, THEN RESIGNEDLY THRUST HIS KNIFE INTO HIS BELT AND WALKED AWAY...



LUIGI STOOPED AND HELPED TRELAWNEY TO HIS FEET. THE OTHER BANDITS DRIFTED AWAY AND TRELAWNEY REALISED WITH RELIEF THAT HE WAS NO LONGER IN DANGER.



## Chapter 2. Last Man of Averno

TRELAWNEY FOUND THAT HE WAS NOW UNDER LUIGI'S PROTECTION. NOBODY MOLESTED HIM~~ EVEN SALVATORE ONLY SCOWLED AT HIM FROM A DISTANCE ...

I STILL CAN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHY HE WANTED TO KILL ME. I'VE DONE HIM NO HARM.

SOME MEN ENJOY KILLING. EVEN IN YOUR ARMY THERE ARE MEN LIKE THAT.

TRELAWNEY KNEW HE WAS REFERRING TO SADLER AND REALISED THAT WHAT HE SAID WAS TRUE. LUIGI WAS OBVIOUSLY NO KILLER HIMSELF~~AND YET HE WAS TREATED WITH STRANGE RESPECT BY THE REST OF THE BAND ...

WHAT...YOU'VE FOUND MY HAT! WHERE WAS IT?

THE ONE WHO STOLE IT BROUGHT IT BACK TO ME. HERE IS A BLANKET, MY FRIEND, IT WILL KEEP YOU WARM THESE COLD NIGHTS.

BEFORE THEY TURNED IN FOR THE NIGHT, TRELAWNEY ASKED THE QUESTION THAT HAD BEEN TROUBLING HIM SINCE HE HAD SEEN THAT SILENT VILLAGE ON THE PLAIN ...

LUIGI, WHAT HAPPENED IN AVERNO?



THERE WAS SILENCE FOR A MOMENT AND TRELAWNEY WONDERED IF LUIGI WOULD ANSWER. THEN, STARING INTO SPACE, LUIGI SPOKE...

IT WAS THE  
ACCURSED BOCHE  
THAT DID IT! AN  
S.S. REGIMENT FELL  
UPON US LIKE A  
PACK OF WOLVES...

AND TRELAWNEY KNEW THAT  
THE SICILIAN WAS LIVING  
THE PAST AGAIN.

"THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN BANDITS HERE IN THE HILLS~~ PEOPLE LIKE SALVATORE. THE LAND WAS POOR, THEY COULD LIVE NO OTHER WAY. BUT WE IN AVERNO~~ WE WERE FARMERS..."

YOU CANNOT DO THIS...  
WITHOUT FOOD OUR  
ANIMALS WILL DIE!  
WE HAVE GIVEN ALL  
WE CAN SPARE!

PAH! YOU HAVE MORE HIDDEN AWAY  
SOMEWHERE, I KNOW YOU PEASANTS!  
ANYWAY, THE GERMAN ARMY IS MORE  
IMPORTANT THAN YOUR HALF-  
STARVED ANIMALS.



"THEY MADE OUR LIVES INTOLERABLE. OUR LIVESTOCK, WE OURSELVES STARVED... SOME EVEN DIED. SO SOME OF US, TOO, BECAME BANDITS..."



"WE KNEW THAT IF THEY CAUGHT US WE WOULD BE SHOT. BUT WE ALWAYS WORKED WELL AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE. THEN, A WEEK AGO, WE JOINED WITH SOME OF SALVATORE'S MEN TO MAKE AN AMBUSH IN THESE HILLS..."



## The Undeclared

"WE FIRED THE CHARGE AT JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT, BUT THE LORRY DID NOT CARRY FOOD...IT WAS GOING TO THE S.S. REGIMENT THAT WAS TO DEFEND AVERNO...AND IT WAS PACKED WITH AMMUNITION..."



"I WAS FARTHEST AWAY AND I ALONE ESCAPED. ALL I CAN REMEMBER AFTER THAT IS WAKING UP AND SEEING A GERMAN PATROL BELOW ME IN THE CRATER..."



I KNOW THESE MEN--THEY ARE FROM AVERNO, SIR!

ARE THEY, INDEED? PUT THEM IN THE TRANSPORT--THE OBERST WILL BE PLEASED TO KNOW WHO HAS BEEN CAUSING HIM SO MUCH TROUBLE.

\*THE S.S. REGIMENT WAS BASED IN AVERNO. THEY PLANNED TO DEFEND IT AGAINST THE BRITISH, BUT THEY WERE SHORT OF AMMUNITION AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THAT LORRY LOAD MEANT THEY HAD TO WITHDRAW...



"FROM WHERE I HID I COULD SEE THE GERMANS CARRYING THE CARCASSES OF OUR ANIMALS TO THEIR LORRIES... THEN THEY LINED UP ALL MY PEOPLE IN A FIELD AND THE OBERST GAVE AN ORDER..."



LUIGI'S STORY ENDED AND HE SAT MOTIONLESS, HIS FACE A MASK OF SORROW...

SO THAT IS WHY SALVATORE CALLED YOU 'THE LAST MAN OF AVERNO'.

YES. I ALONE AM LEFT~~AND THEY HAVE SWORN TO AVENGE ME.



TRELAWNEY LAY AWAKE FOR A LONG TIME THAT NIGHT AND WHEN HE FINALLY FELL ASLEEP HE KNEW WHAT HE MUST DO. IN THE MORNING, HE TACKLED LUIGI ...

LOOK, LUIGI, WE BOTH WANT THE SAME THING! TOGETHER WE COULD DRIVE THE NAZIS BACK TO WHERE THEY CAME FROM!

WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE~~ I WILL SPEAK TO THE OTHERS.



SALVATORE WAS THE STUMBLING BLOCK~~AS THEY KNEW HE WOULD BE~~ BUT THEY GRADUALLY WON HIM OVER ...

AND WHEN WE HAVE HELPED YOU, WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTERWARDS? THE AUTHORITIES WILL SAY~~ THESE ARE BANDITS, WE HAVE THEM NOW. WE WILL PUT THEM IN JAIL!

WHO WILL DARE TO TOUCH YOU WHEN YOU HAVE HELPED TO DRIVE OUT THE GERMANS? YOU WILL BE A HERO TO YOUR PEOPLE~~ AND THE BRITISH WILL BE YOUR FRIENDS!





THE IDEA OF BEING THE SAVIOUR OF SICILY WAS ENOUGH FOR SALVATORE'S VANITY. WITH A MIGHTY YELL, HE ROUSED HIS FOLLOWERS INTO A CHEER WHICH RANG THROUGH THE HILLS ...



SALVATORE'S FIRST FLUSH OF ENTHUSIASM SOON PASSED AND HE AGREED TO ACCOMPANY LUIGI AND TRELAWNEY ON THE HAZARDOUS TRIP THROUGH THE GERMAN LINES ...



NIGHT CAME AND THE THREE MEN MOVED FORWARD. WITH SALVATORE IN THE LEAD, THEY SLUNK ALONG DITCHES AND CRAWLED THROUGH DUSTY PATCHES OF SCRUB, ALWAYS ON THE ALERT FOR GERMAN PATROLS OR SENTRIES ...



SALVATORE DISAPPEARED INTO THE DARKNESS. PEERING FORWARD, THE OTHER TWO SAW A SHADOW RISE FROM THE GROUND AT THE VERY FEET OF THE GERMAN SENTRY...



THE THREE MEN FLED INTO THE DARKNESS. ONCE, DISTANTLY BEHIND THEM, THEY HEARD SHOUTS AND THE RATTLE OF GUNFIRE...



THEY WERE NEARLY RUNNING NOW IN THEIR HASTE TO CLEAR THE GERMAN LINES BEFORE DAWN. SUDDENLY A SHOT CRACKED ABOVE THEIR HEADS AND DARK SHAPES ROSE FROM BEHIND ROCKS AND BUSHES...



THEY HAD BLUNDERED INTO AN ADVANCE PARTY OF THE RECONNAISSANCE CORPS. UNDER GUARD, THEY WERE DESPATCHED. POST HASTE TO COMPANY H.Q.



HIS IDENTITY ESTABLISHED, TRELAWNEY WAS ABLE TO TAKE SALVATORE AND LUIGI TO THE BRIGADIER IN CHARGE OF THE SECTOR...



YOUR OLD SQUADRON IS STILL IN THE VAN, TRELAWNEY, BUT THEY'RE UP AGAINST AN S.S. REGIMENT AND I FANCY SADLER IS FINDING THE JOB TOUGHER THAN HE EXPECTED.



AT THAT MOMENT, SADLER WAS FACING STIFF OPPOSITION. MUCH TO HIS DISGUST, HE HAD ONLY ONE CHOICE LEFT TO HIM...



THE S.S. PANZER REGIMENT COVERING THE GERMAN RETREAT WERE FORMIDABLE OPPONENTS. SADLER HAD ALREADY LOST MANY OF HIS BEST CREWS AND THE MORALE OF THE REST WAS DRIPPING ...

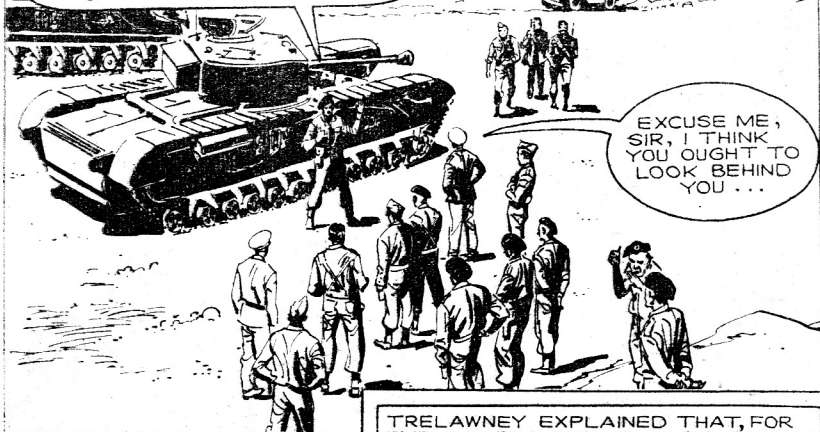
WHERE'S THE DARNED INFANTRY?  
**THEY'RE**  
SUPPOSED TO  
DEAL WITH THOSE  
ANTI-TANK  
GUNS!

THAT'S IT,  
ALWAYS BLAME  
SOMEBODY ELSE!  
WE'D GET ON  
BETTER IF YOU  
DIDN'T GO AT  
EVERYTHING LIKE  
A BULL AT A  
GATE!



BUT FATE HAD YET ANOTHER BITTER SHOCK  
IN STORE FOR CAPTAIN SADLER...

I AM THE COMMANDING OFFICER  
OF THIS SQUADRON AND WHEN  
I GIVE AN ORDER I WANT IT  
CARRIED OUT IMM... ..



EXCUSE ME,  
SIR, I THINK  
YOU OUGHT TO  
LOOK BEHIND  
YOU...

SADLER FLUSHED SCARLET  
AS HE RECOGNISED HIS OLD  
COMMANDER...

**YOU!** BUT  
I THOUGHT  
YOU WERE...

DEAD? AS YOU  
CAN SEE, I'M NOT.  
SORRY, SADLER--  
I AM ASSUMING  
COMMAND OF THE  
SQUADRON ONCE  
MORE!



TRELAWNEY EXPLAINED THAT, FOR  
THE MOMENT, SADLER WOULD REMAIN  
IN CHARGE BUT WOULD RECEIVE  
ORDERS BY RADIO. THE MESSAGES  
WOULD BE RELAYED FROM BEHIND  
THE ENEMY LINES...

OF ALL THE  
CONFOUNDED...  
HEY! THAT'S  
THE MAN FROM  
AVERNO-- HE'S  
STILL GOT  
THE RIFLE,  
HE STOLE!

BUT NOW HE'S GOT  
A CHIT FROM THE  
BRIGADIER SAYING  
HE'S AUTHORISED TO  
HAVE IT. SEE THAT A  
LISTENING WATCH IS  
KEPT FOR OUR SIGNALS.  
CAPTAIN SADLER--  
THOSE ARE THE  
BRIGADIER'S ORDERS,  
AND MINE!





THE JOURNEY BACK THROUGH THE GERMAN LINES WAS FILLED WITH DANGER AND AS EACH HOUR TICKED BY, TRELAWNEY GREW MORE UNEASY AS TO THE SUCCESS OF THE OPERATION...



BUT TRELAWNEY'S FEARS WERE SOON QUELLED FOR SUDDENLY, AS THEY CAME OUT ON A SMALL PLATEAU, SALVATORE CALLED A HALT.



TRELAWNEY LOST NO TIME IN GETTING OFF HIS FIRST RADIO MESSAGE AND THEN ALL THEY COULD DO WAS WAIT FOR THE SUPPLY DROP THAT THE BRIGADIER HAD PROMISED TO LAY ON ...

I WONDER IF WE CAN BRING THIS OFF? THE BRIGADIER SEEMS TO THINK SO~~ BUT WHAT'S HE GOT TO LOSE? SOME ARMS AND AMMUNITION~~ AND ME!



THEN THE DRONE OF A DAKOTA'S ENGINES DISPELLED TRELAWNEY'S MOMENT OF DOUBT. COLOURED TORCHES FLASHED THE PRE-ARRANGED SIGNAL AND MINUTES LATER, THE SUPPLY PARACHUTES WERE DRIFTING EARTHWARDS.

NOW WE CAN REALLY FIGHT THE GERMANS!

I HOPE SO, SALVATORE!  
I HOPE SO!



BY STICKING TO SECRET PATHS ACROSS INHOSPITABLE MOUNTAINS, SALVATORE HAD KEPT HIS TINY FORCE OUT OF DANGER. BUT NOW THEY HAD TO GO DOWN TO THE VALLEYS ...

WHEN WILL WE SEE THE BRIDGE?

IT CANNOT BE FAR, NOW!



SALVATORE TOOK THEM INTO A THICK WOOD. LUIGI AND TRELAWNEY DREW LEVEL WITH SALVATORE AND FOUND THEMSELVES DIRECTLY ABOVE THEIR OBJECTIVE -- THE BRIDGE ...



THE BRIDGE WAS THE ONLY MEANS OF CROSSING THE CANYON AND ALREADY THE EXPLOSIVES WERE IN POSITION, READY TO SHATTER THE ANCIENT STONEMWORK ...



REVERBERATING THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS CAME THE CRASH AND THUNDER OF BATTLE AS THE BRITISH ATTACK MOVED NEARER.

HELLO, ABLE LEADER~~THIS IS RED ONE~~AM IN POSITION... OVER.

HELLO, RED ONE~~THIS IS ABLE LEADER~~POSITION BAKER CHARLIE ONE FIVE... OVER.

THE S.S. PANZER REGIMENT WERE FIGHTING A SKILFUL REARGUARD ACTION AND THE ADVANCE WAS SLOW...

JUST WHAT THE HECK DOES TRELAWNEY THINK HE CAN DO WITH A CROWD OF EYTIE CROOKS?

DURING THE NEXT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, TRELAWNEY MADE THE SICILIANS PRACTISE AGAIN AND AGAIN WITH THEIR NEWLY-ACQUIRED WEAPONS.

SO! THEY ARE READY TO FIRE. THAT WAS GOOD~~VERY QUICK.

NOT BAD, BUT THEY MUST PRACTISE AGAIN TONIGHT. I WANT THEM TO BE ABLE TO SITE AND FIRE THAT MACHINE GUN IN THE DARK!

## Chapter 3. The Bridge

THEN, AT DUSK ONE EVENING, CAME THE TIME TO ACT...



THE FIRST PHASE OF THE OPERATION CLICKED INTO PLACE. SALVATORE AND TRELAWNEY HAD THE MOST DANGEROUS TASK -- PUTTING OUT OF ACTION THE CHARGES THAT WERE ATTACHED TO THE BRIDGE, ...



THE MOON SHONE FITFULLY THROUGH THE SCUDDING CLOUDS AND EACH TIME IT ILLUMINATED THEM, TRELAWNEY AND SALVATORE HAD TO STAND STOCK-STILL IN THE FREEZING WATER...



ROUND THE PIERS OF THE BRIDGE THE WATER RAN DEEP AND THE TWO MEN HAD TO FIGHT THE CURRENT TO GET TO THE CHARGES. BREATHLESSLY THEY CLUNG ON TO THE PIER...





WITH INFINITE CAUTION THEY TOOK AWAY SOME OF THE ROCKS THEN REMOVED THE EXPLOSIVE AND SANK IT IN THE RIVER. THEN, JUST AS CAREFULLY, THEY REPLACED THE ROCKS AND TUCKED THE SEVERED WIRES BACK INTO THEM...



THEY WERE STILL WORKING ON THE SECOND PIER WHEN A GUARD HAPPENED TO LOOK OVER THE PARAPET DIRECTLY ABOVE THEM AND THEIR HEARTS ALMOST STOPPED BEATING.



FOR WHAT SEEMED AN ETERNITY THE GERMAN STOOD THERE LOOKING DOWN THE RIVER. BUT AT LAST HE TURNED AND RESUMED HIS SLOW PATROL...



## The Undefeated

TRELAWNEY ALREADY KNEW THAT THE BRITISH WOULD ATTACK AT DAWN -- AND NOW HE WAS ABLE TO GIVE THEM THE NEWS THEY WERE EAGERLY AWAITING ...



IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING THE SICILIANS SLIPPED SILENTLY INTO POSITION UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS. THEY HAD ONE GREAT ADVANTAGE -- THE GERMANS WERE NOT EXPECTING AN ENEMY TO ATTACK THEM FROM BEHIND.



EVEN BEFORE THE SUN CAME OVER THE HORIZON THE NOISE OF THE BRITISH BOMBARDMENT THUNDERED AND ROLLED ROUND THE MOUNTAINS. TRELAWNEY WAITED AS LONG AS HE DARED. THEN GAVE THE SIGNAL FOR THE BANDITS TO ATTACK...



VICKERS AND BREN SPAT LEADEN DEATH FROM THE HIDDEN POSITIONS TO WHICH THE SICILIANS HAD DRAGGED THEM...



IN MINUTES, THE POSITION AT THE BRIDGE HAD CHANGED. NOW IT WAS THE SICILIANS, NOT THE GERMANS, WHO HELD THE BALANCE OF POWER...



BUT SADLER WAS STILL A MILE AWAY, FIGHTING THE BATTLE OF HIS LIFE...



ONLY TWO GERMANS REMAINED AND THEY WERE IN A CONCRETE BLOCKHOUSE SHIELDED BY THE OVERHANGING CLIFF. FROM THERE THEY WERE TO BLOW THE BRIDGE...



THE GERMAN AREA COMMANDER HAD ALREADY BEEN WARNED OF THE REVERSAL AND HE WAS WORKING TO RETRIEVE THE SITUATION...

THE S.S. ARE PULLING BACK BUT WE MUST BE READY TO DESTROY THE BRIDGE IMMEDIATELY THERE IS ANY CHANCE OF OUR BEING OVERRUN. MAKE SURE THE PLUNGER IS READY FOR INSTANT USE!

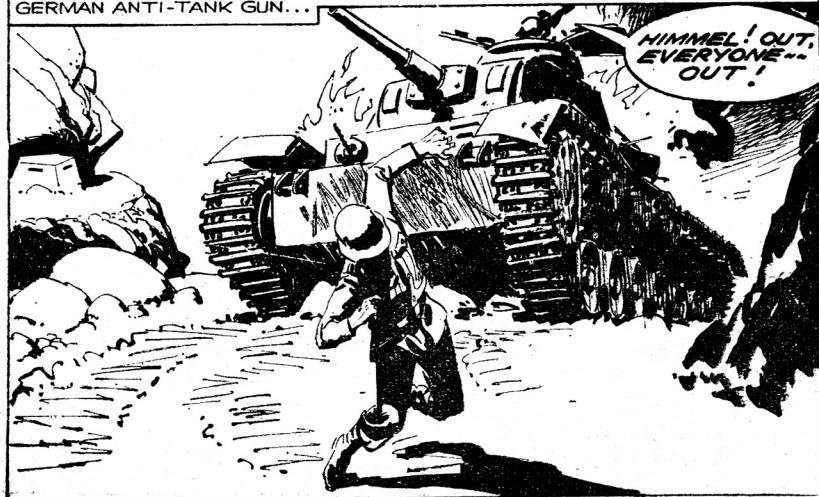
JA, HERR LEUTNANT.



THE FIRST OF THE S.S. ARMOURD VEHICLES WAS AT THAT MOMENT TRUNDLING ROUND THE CORNER MAKING FULL SPEED FOR THE BRIDGE.



MANY OF THE BANDIT'S WERE DESERTERS FROM THE ITALIAN ARMY AND THEY WERE FAMILIAR WITH THE WORKING OF THE CAPTURED GERMAN ANTI-TANK GUN...





LUIGI'S DEADLY ACCURATE RIFLE WAS COMING INTO ITS OWN, TOO...

AHA, LUIGI,  
YOU HAVE NOT  
FORGOTTEN  
HOW TO SHOOT!

I REMEMBER  
THAT THESE ARE  
THE BUTCHERS WHO  
DESTROYED AVERNO~  
THEN I CANNOT MISS!

AND A SHORT WAY OFF, THE  
GERMANS WERE FINDING THE  
BRITISH ARMoured SPEARHEAD  
TOO TOUGH TO HOLD...

BACK TO  
THE BRIDGE,  
**SCHNELL!**

THE MOMENT HE FELT THE  
ENEMY OPPOSITION BEGIN TO  
WEAKEN, SADLER SENT THE  
SQUADRON STORMING FORWARD.

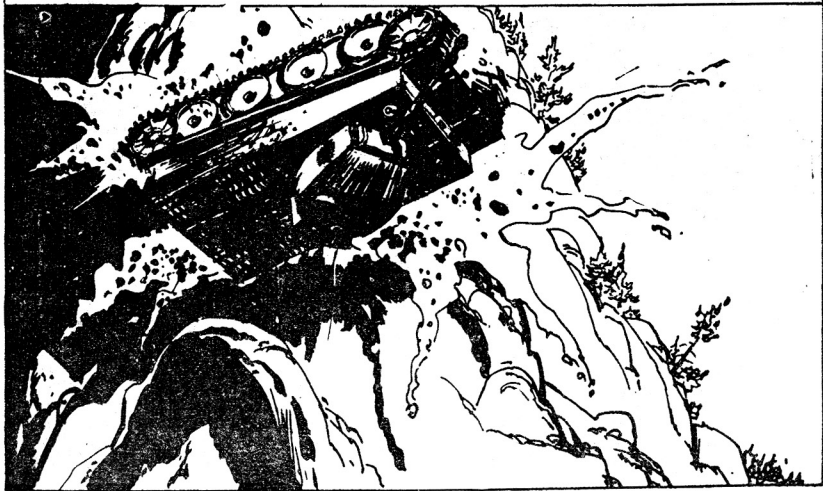
HELLO, ALL  
STATIONS, THIS  
IS ABLE LEADER.  
ADVANCE...  
**ADVANCE!**

## The Undeclared

THE APPROACH TO THE BRIDGE WAS A SCENE OF TERRIFYING DEVASTATION MADE WORSE BY THE RUTHLESS TACTICS OF THE RETREATING S.S.



BUT EVEN AS THE TIGER MOVED FORWARD AFTER CLEARING A PATH, AN ARMOUR-PIERCING SHELL SMASHED ONE OF ITS TRACKS. OUT OF CONTROL, THE MONSTER LURCHED SIDWAYS OVER THE EDGE OF THE PRECIPICE...



THE GERMAN LEUTNANT IN THE BLOCKHOUSE WATCHED IN HORROR AS THE S.S. REARGUARD WERE SMASHED BEFORE HIS EYES...



BUT THE DEATHLY HUSH THAT FOLLOWED THE PRESSING OF THE PLUNGER MOCKED THE HARSH COMMAND OF THE LEUTNANT...



THE GERMAN OFFICER MADE A GALLANT BUT VAIN ATTEMPT TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE FOR HE WAS SWIFTLY PICKED OFF BY A SICILIAN SNIPER.



LYING UP IN THEIR ROCKY FORTRESS, THE SICILIANS WERE IN FULL COMMAND OF THE SITUATION...



BUT SALVATORE'S JUBILATION WAS TO BE SHORT-LIVED FOR THE GERMANS WERE QUICK TO RETALIATE.



BEFORE LONG, THE ENEMY HAD SUCCEEDED IN OUTFLANKING THE AMBUSHERS' POSITION.



THE VANGUARD OF THE BRITISH ARMOUR WAS NOT FAR AWAY -- BUT NOW EVEN SECONDS MEANT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

HELLO, ABLE LEADER, THIS IS TRELAWNEY. WE CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER.



THERE WAS ONLY ONE ARMoured VEHICLE STILL IN THE PATH OF THE BRITISH FORCES. IT WAS THE COMMAND VEHICLE OF THE S.S. LEADER, A GREAT, SELF-PROPELLED GUN...



## The Undeclared

THE CAPTURED 88 M.M. MIGHT STILL HAVE STOPPED THAT SELF-PROPELLED GUN BUT AT THAT CRUCIAL MOMENT, ITS SICILIAN MAKE-SHIFT CREW WERE TAKEN FROM THE FLANK.



THE BIG GUN LUMBERED SAFELY ACROSS THE BRIDGE AND SLEWED TO A HALT UNDER THE PROTECTIVE OVERHANG OF THE CLIFF, THE LONG BARREL TRAVERSING MENACINGLY ON TO THE APPROACH ROAD.





THE SIGNAL IN TRELAWNEY'S HEADPHONES WAS GETTING STRONGER ...

HELLO, RED ONE, THIS IS ABLE LEADER. WE MUST BE NEARING THE BRIDGE. OVER.

HELLO, ABLE LEADER. PROCEED WITH CARE. AN S.P. GUN IS COVERING THE ROAD.

THE MOMENT SADLER POKES HIS NOSE ROUND THE CORNER THAT BLIGHTER WILL GET HIM!

AS LONG AS THE S.P. GUN COMMANDED THE BRIDGE, THE BRITISH ATTACK COULD BE HELD LONG ENOUGH FOR GERMAN FORCES TO RETRIEVE THE SITUATION. THEN ...

HEY! WHAT THE DEVIL? LUIGI, COME BACK!



CLUTCHING AN ANTI-TANK GRENADE IN HIS HAND, THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF AVERNO RACED THROUGH THE TREES AND DROPPED DOWN ON TO THE ROAD ...

THEY SHALL NOT ESCAPE! THE BLOOD OF MY PEOPLE CRIES OUT FOR VENGEANCE!



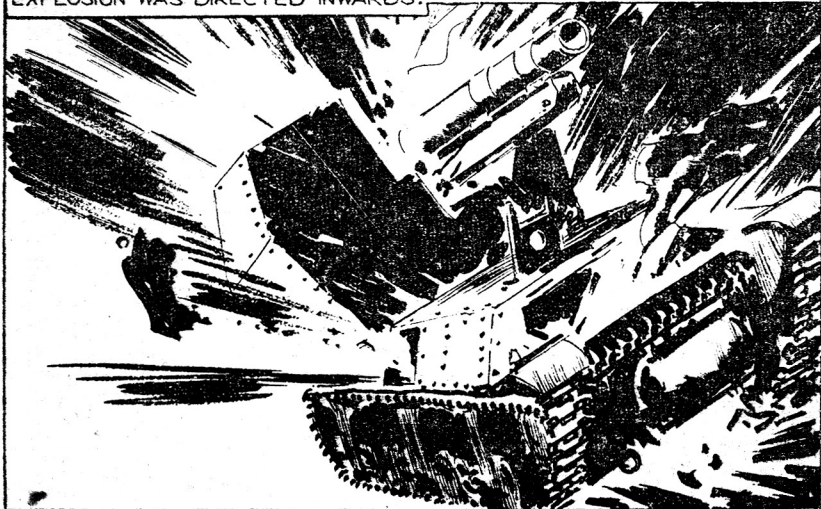
CLUTCHING THE BOMB TO HIS CHEST, LUIGI RAN BLINDLY, DESPERATELY TOWARDS THE GUN...



THE SHOT FROM THE PILLBOX CAUGHT LUIGI IN THE SHOULDER, BUT NOTHING COULD STOP HIM NOW. HE WAS CLAMBERING ON TO THE GUN BEFORE THE CREW REALISED THEIR DANGER.



LUIGI CRASHED THE BOMB DOWN AGAINST THE GUN'S PERISCOPE AND BLANKETED IT WITH HIS BODY SO THAT THE FORCE OF THE EXPLOSION WAS DIRECTED INWARDS.



IN SHOCKED SILENCE, SALVATORE AND TRELAWNEY CAME DOWN TO THE ROAD AS THE ARMoured SPEARHEAD THUNDERED ACROSS THE BRIDGE.



BUT TRELAWNEY, FILLED WITH GRIEF, LED SADLER TO WHERE ONE ORDINARY SICILIAN FARMER LAY DEAD ...



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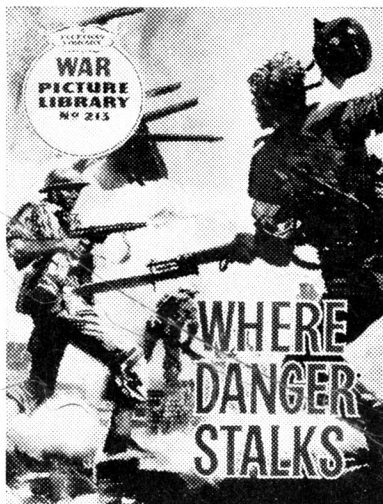
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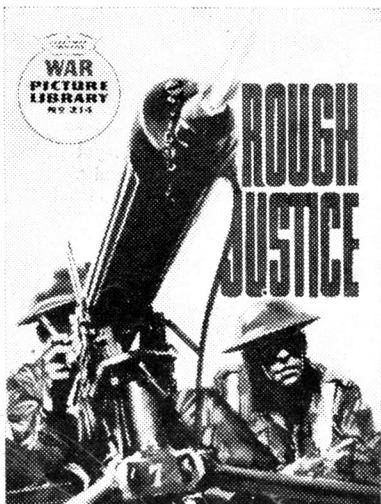
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